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(D. P. Roman)

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Have you considered Wal-Mart's community record?

For instance, Wal-Mart reportedly spends \$4 million a day on public relations to obscure its corporate irresponsibility and position it as an American company that truly cares about communities and, indeed, the country as a whole. But even \$4 million a day can't hide the vicious business model of the largest corporation on the planet.

The Walton family, particularly Sam, founded the company on the basis of lowering prices by withholding decent pay from its employees and creating poor work conditions within its stores. By lowering prices, Sam Walton managed to destroy many businesses that made small towns livable. Wal-Mart constantly plays the miser, demanding that communities support the stores in various ways.

A congressional report in 2004 found that a typical 200-employee Wal-Mart store cost federal taxpayers \$420,000 for children's health care, tax credits and deductions for low-income families. That equals about \$2,103 per Wal-Mart employee, or an annual welfare bill of \$2.5 billion for Wal-Mart's 1.2 million employees in America. What that boils down to is that Americans subsidize Wal-Mart so that the Walton family and the stockholders can continue to reap huge profits.

From the New York Times:

An [internal memo](#) sent to [Wal-Mart's](#) board of directors proposes numerous ways to hold down spending on health care and other benefits while seeking to minimize damage to the retailer's reputation. Among the recommendations are hiring more part-time workers and discouraging unhealthy people from working at Wal-Mart.

In the memorandum, M. Susan Chambers, Wal-Mart's executive vice president for benefits, also recommends reducing 401(k) contributions and wooing younger, and presumably healthier, workers by offering education benefits. The memo voices concern that workers with seven years' seniority earn more than workers with one year's seniority, but are no more productive.

To discourage unhealthy job applicants, Ms. Chambers suggests that Wal-Mart arrange for "all jobs to include some physical activity (e.g., all cashiers do some cart-gathering)."

The memo acknowledged that Wal-Mart, the world's largest retailer, had to walk a fine line in restraining benefit costs because critics had attacked it for being stingy on wages and health coverage. Ms. Chambers acknowledged that 46 percent of the children of Wal-Mart's 1.33 million United States employees were uninsured or on Medicaid.

Wal-Mart has applied to the FDIC for a banking charter that could allow them to have a Wal-Mart-owned bank in every store. Wal-Mart has tried in the past to obtain banking powers.

For the FDIC to grant Wal-Mart a charter would mean the destruction of many banks in our cities and towns. Across the land many communities fight long and hard to keep Wal-Mart stores OUT of their area because the people are aware of Wal-Mart's costs to the community and its record for the destruction of small towns.

We do not want Wal-Mart to have a banking charter in Marion County or in Florida. Thus, we ask that you use the power given by the people to stop this travesty from happening. Do not allow Wal-Mart the opportunity to put another hand in our pockets.

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